“Commercial and residential buildings account for more than 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Local governments are leading efforts to improve building codes, encourage renewable energy, and create other incentives to reduce energy use in buildings.”

– Commissioner Richard Loftus
Charlotte County

“Leon County and other local governments are driving economic development strategies to create green businesses and green jobs that will help Florida’s economy and fight global warming.”

– Commissioner Cliff Theall, Leon County

“Local officials are the first responders who must deal with the impacts of climate change like rising sea levels that threaten Florida’s coastline, our multi-billion dollar tourism industry, and our way of life. That is why Broward and three other South Florida counties representing 5.5 million Floridians formed a regional climate compact and will combine efforts to implement clean energy solutions and prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change.”

– Kristin D. Jacobs, Broward County Commissioner

“One third of carbon emissions come from the transportation sector, so reducing vehicle use is critical to slowing climate change. Miami-Dade is making a huge investment in bus and rail transit, just one example of local leadership to get cars off the roads.”

– Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Miami-Dade County

Learn more about how you can promote local climate action at:
www.climatecommunities.us | www.icleiusa.org

Climate Communities is a national coalition of cities and counties that is educating federal policymakers about the essential role of local governments in addressing climate change and seeking federal policies to empower local climate action.

Established in 1990, ICLEI USA is a membership association of more than 600 cities and counties that provides expertise, technical support, training, and innovative tools to help local governments advance their emissions reductions and sustainability goals.

Protecting Florida’s Economic Future with Local Clean Energy Solutions

“**Federal stimulus dollars and state energy policies** are helping Florida cities and counties build the state’s clean energy economy and combat climate change. **Federal carbon pollution standards and a reliable revenue stream are essential** to empower continuing local action.”

– Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan, Gainesville

Empowering Local Government Climate Action

Florida's Clean Energy Challenge

Florida is more vulnerable to the worst effects of climate change than any other state. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that global warming will cause sea level to rise one to two feet on Florida's coasts, and major storms will be more frequent and more damaging. These effects will have heavy economic consequences for the state, destroying local real estate, jeopardizing critical local infrastructure and threatening the state's $57 billion tourism industry. Florida is also suffering under the current economic downturn, with an 11 percent unemployment rate – the nation's eighth worst.

Protecting the Future, Creating Opportunities

Local governments in Florida are at the forefront of efforts to build a clean energy economy that will create green jobs and prevent these costly impacts of climate change. The Sunshine state has tremendous potential to develop homegrown solar energy, and Florida's warm climate makes it well-suited to develop fast-growing crops for biofuels. Florida already ranks in the top 10 states for jobs in the clean energy economy, with more than 30,000 jobs in that sector in 2007, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts. Implementing clean energy solutions will also help reduce carbon pollution that causes climate change.

Local Government Leadership is Essential

Local governments are in a unique position to implement programs that decrease global warming pollution and create market opportunities for clean energy products and services. Local governments set standards and create incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy use in residential and commercial buildings, drive new economic development strategies that create green jobs, and lead on transit and smart growth initiatives that reduce emissions.

Local Clean Energy Leadership *in Florida*

Orange County recently installed a one megawatt solar Photo Voltaic system on its Convention Center. It will generate 1,300 to 1,500 megawatt hours of electricity per year, which is equivalent to the power used by 80 to 100 typical homes. The PV system will utilize high-efficiency, flat-plate collectors, expected to occupy approximately 200,000 square feet of roof space on the North/South Building.

Miami-Dade County's voters approved a half penny sales surtax in 2002 to support a $17 billion transportation improvement plan. Over two thirds of the capital expenses are devoted to expanding bus and rail services – a key component of the County's strategy to reduce vehicle use and decrease carbon emissions.

Leon County has established an Office of Sustainability and a Climate Action Plan that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from county operations by 20 percent by 2017 and 80 percent by 2050. The County plan will cut energy consumption and emissions through improvements in building efficiency, expanded waste reduction and recycling, lower emission vehicles, strategic urban forestry, and community outreach and education.

The **City of Key West** is implementing its climate action plan to identify and protect key infrastructure and minimize future environmental impacts from rising sea levels. Thus far, the City and its partners are elevating a frequently flooded road, designing new storm water pumping stations, and installing a new drinking water treatment plant to address anticipated salt water intrusion.

Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and **Monroe Counties** recently established the South Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, a cooperative effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the region from rising sea levels, salt water intrusion, severe storms, and other impacts of climate change.

The **City of Orlando**, one of 25 Solar America Cities designated by the U.S. Department of Energy, aims to install 15 megawatts of solar power by 2015. The city's strategy involves streamlining the permitting process for installing solar systems; organizing solar education and training workshops; conducting a GIS-based solar resource analysis to identify solar installation sites; and conducting a market analysis of barriers to solar technologies.

The **City of Gainesville's** municipal utility recently became the first in America to establish a solar feed-in tariff that will pay for power generated by solar electric systems. The program will reduce 40,093 metric tons of carbon emissions through 2016.